



Pàrlamaid Òigridh na Gàidhealtachd

# #nofilter

*Highland Young People Having the Right to Freedom of Expression (UNCRC Article 13)*

**UHI Inverness Campus, 24<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> June 2019**





## Introduction from Highland Youth Parliament Chair, Rowen Henderson from Nairn:

'The Highland Youth Parliament Conference is always an extremely valuable and enjoyable event and this year has been no different.

My biggest takeaway from every conference is the people I get to meet and the friendships which are formed. The young people I meet are some of the most hard working and inspirational people I know, they are not scared to have their voices be heard, they are considerate and acutely aware of the issues which affect them and their communities and often articulate this with beautiful precision and all of this genuinely fills me with hope for the future.

I look forward to seeing the way these people will further shape the world with their positive influence.

I say this because I wish to highlight the hard work already going on in communities. I have witnessed that with everyone trying to make their immediate surrounding just a little bit better, by addressing problems in their community in say their youth forums, running events, engaging with others and so on that the whole of highlands benefits and I am glad that this year's conference managed to highlight this.

I think the sheer scale and range of activities in the schedule is a testament to the many great projects going on in the highlands and a reminder of just how lucky we are as young people to have access to such a wealth of opportunities and involvement. It is truly one of the best places to be a young person.'





## Highland Youth Convener, Esme Leitch commented:

'The Highland Youth Parliament Conference is a huge asset to youth participation in Highland and a date in the diary that is looked forward to by young people from across the authority.

This year, there is a really diverse range of sessions for the young people to take part in, and some chances for them to relax and meet new people.

I'm really excited to hear some of the conversations that come out of the sessions, which cover big topics like climate change and mental health and take any comments further in my role as Youth Convener.'

The 2019 Highland Youth Parliament (HYP) conference was a celebration of Highland young people and all they are involved in.





HYP includes young people from all 29 Highland Secondary Schools and Local Youth Forums. The HYP conference is a young person-led event at which approx. 80 young people from across the Highlands meet with Service Directors, Lead Officers and Elected Members from The Highland Council, High Life Highland and partner agencies, in order to influence decision making that impacts Highland's young people.

The event was themed around young people's 'Right to Freedom of Expression' with sessions of importance to young people in Highland including peer support for young people's mental health, climate change, an Education Q&A with The Highland Council's Head of Education, Highland Children's Forum's Inspire Group and the 'Grow2gether' teenage pregnancy project.

A draft of the new Highland Youth Work Strategy (created by a cross-sector working group facilitated by the Youth Convener and High Life Highland and co-produced with young people) was presented for comment and update by the Parliament, prior to its consideration by the Highland Council at its August round of meetings.

NHS Highland and Waverley Care reported back to young people, following consultation at a previous conference, with an update on how the C-Card scheme – a sexual health and access to condoms initiative – has developed.

Young people discussed what they can do in their local areas, working with The Highland Council, to address climate change.

Delegates from Argyll and Bute and Western Isles Councils also asked to attend in order to learn more about HYP and the role of the Highland Youth Convener, and we were delighted to welcome them at the conference.

The Northern Alliance (NA) Youth Conference, involving 70 young people from across all 8 local authorities which make up the NA took place alongside the Highland Youth Parliament conference.



**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June** “Nice to tweet you.....”

Get To Know Your Area Groups  
 Launch of Condom Distribution Scheme  
 Mental Health Peer Support Session  
 Climate Change Workshop  
 Hello from Inspire, HCF Young People’s Action Group  
 Developing a Youth Charter for the North, RIC Group



*“I found the climate change workshop really engaging and inspiring”*  
*“It was a great insight into other areas of Scotland!”*  
*“A great way to start a term with SYP!”*



## Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> June “Back in an Instagram....”

Youth Work Strategy Pre-release  
Education Q&A  
Young People’s Voices (Film clips)  
Growing2gether – Teenage Pregnancy Project Film  
Local Area Groups  
Open Mic



***“I got so much from being able to enter a dialogue with officials”***

***“Super informative and engaging”***

***“Overall a great experience I will hold with me for a long time”***

***“The education Q&A was an example of something promising, more such expansive discussions should be sought”***

***“I always feel I leave conference as a changed but better person”***



## Highland Youth Parliament 2019 Issues

The Highland Youth Parliament conference attendees enjoyed a full range of subjects for discussion. The following list includes some of the discussion points and solutions from the day.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

#### Things we can do

- Reduce and Reuse (recycle)
- Eat less meat / dairy
- Turn off unused electronics
- Use public transport more often and cars less
- Prevent pollution – recycling etc
- Reduce meat consumption
- Cut down electronic times
- Make sure devices are switched off properly – not on stand-by

#### Things Schools can do

- Use eco-friendly transport (buses)
- School canteens use reusable bottles / plates, no polystyrene or one use products
- Put recycling facilities in place
- S1&2 plant trees
- Publicise climate change
- Cut down on electric time (chrome books)
- Education on fake news surrounding climate change
- Heat schools more effectively
- Allow staff to use school transport
- Use school buses more efficiently
- Improve heating / open windows and blinds
- Have more renewable / recyclable materials in school

#### Things schools can do if they *work together*

- Raise Awareness
- Spread word and communicate to create ideas
- More voices to create a change

#### What are the most important things *Highland Council* could be doing to address the climate crisis?

- Better promotion of the issue
- Making cities cleaner
- More recycling bins in schools but also town centre
- Eco flag campaigners for schools



- Less plastic / polystyrene in schools or switching to bio degradable alternatives
- Campaigns / poster to promote litter picking
- De politicising the issue
- More education in schools
- Electric buses
- Better education
- More recycling bins in public areas and schools
- Refund / bottle swap schemes
- Council issued reusable water bottles
- Making school canteens plastic / polystyrene free
- More bamboo / sustainable options

## MENTAL HEALTH

- What is being done to address mental health support in schools? Big issue in Highland.
- Support comes much later, need earlier intervention
- Scottish Government committed to ensuring each school has access to a counselor - Still need to get the funding, and recruit councillors next term
- Share examples that work well:
  - Nairn Academy – support at exam times, buddies older and younger
  - NHSH - HMWB Toolkit – for parents / carers / teachers / YDO's
  - Suicide prevention App
  - UHI senior phase: MHWB taken very seriously. MHWB is/should be part of day to day learning
  - Decider skills
  - Self-help tools (Charleston Academy)

## ASN

- Young people need to have more of a say in their support plan and support needs
- Young people would like more input on how/which ASN support staff are hired
- Need to continue plans to support ASN
- Childs Plans – young people involvement
- Work with Inspire Highland group
- Need support for ASN – produce and share:
  - Tools for build-up process
  - Chrome books help
  - Reassurance from staff

## YOUTH SERVICES





- Need to promote an understanding amongst Head Teachers and teachers re what youth services do (and third sector Youth organisations)

## SCHOOL SUBJECTS

- How can we improve the choices of classes in Highland?
- How many subjects are too many? Should the required minimum of subjects be covered?
- We have an online/Skype teacher and it is very hard to learn and concentrate. How can we improve / fix this?

## CUTS

- How are the cuts going to affect our schools?

## LANGUAGES

- In a world where languages are becoming increasingly important, can further cuts to this and virtual areas of education be justified?
- Why is Gaelic not offered for those who want it?

## LGBTI

- Why is there no education for young people regarding LGBTQ+ community?

## RURILITY

- How are we encouraging young people to remain or return to our remote, rural areas? What incentives are there when there is limited affordable housing, limited transport and buying and running a car is expensive on young people's wages?

## PSE

- Why do some people not get PSE?
- Young Carers should be part of the curriculum, teachers should also be given an awareness session
- Need lesson plans and Toolkit
- Relationships important
- Relevance, keeping up to date important
- Work needs to be done on LGBT
- PSE sometimes used for study period
- More to be done on sex and relationships



- Drugs education
- Not always getting taught the right kind of things
- Need a review of PSE curriculum
- Share training review
- Take back to Q10 leading PSE
- Meaningful up to date feedback to Head Teachers
- Start to share resources
- Tell senior management in schools young people's / your needs